



24 Fascinating Days **Istanbul to Athens** **Cradles of Civilisation, featuring Gallipoli, Cappadocia and those Greek Isles**

Explore the ancient wonders of Türkiye and the iconic Greek Islands

Ancient Turkish Empires, iconic Greek Islands

Astonishing Istanbul, astride Europe and Asia. In Cappadocia soar high in a hot air balloon, sleep in a rock cave hotel, immerse yourself in Albatross' special 'Gallipoli Experience' with so many visits starting with a private cruise into Anzac Cove. Visit ancient Knossos, Troy, Pergamum, Ephesus. Spend 10 nights on 4 iconic Greek Islands - Rhodes, Crete, Santorini and Mykonos, before your finale in Athens. Come with us on a 4WD Cretan Mountain excursion, dine in a Crete Mountain village, experience a 'foodies' walking tour in Istanbul, enjoy a wine pairing lunch on a cool Santorini winery terrace, and a picnic lunch on an olive oil farm on Mykonos. Visit magical Lindos and Aghios Nikolaos, walk with us through the whitewashed alleys on Mykonos, bathe in the golden glow of the famous Santorini sunset. Come join us!



Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach & inter-island ferries in Greece
Economy class flights Istanbul to Cappadocia & Rhodes to Crete, 23 kg checked luggage and 1 piece of hand luggage per person on each flight



A complimentary glass of wine, beer or soft drink with all included dinners
39 meals including breakfast daily (B), 5 lunches (L) and 11 evening meals (D)
Welcome drink on Day 1



Hotel portorage of 1 bag per person (where available)
23 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
Free WiFi at most hotels (where available)



ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
Fully escorted by our experienced Turkish Guide in Türkiye and Tour Manager throughout Greece
Local guides as described in the itinerary



Hand Selected Albatross Experiences including a hot air balloon ride in Cappadocia, Bosphorus Cruise, our special 'Gallipoli Experience', visit Türkiye's ancient wonders of Ephesus and Pergamum, Crete 4WD mountain expedition and lunch, wine tasting lunch in Santorini and Olive Oil farm visit and lunch in Mykonos.
ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described



Arrive in Istanbul

Day 1



Hotel Innova Sultanahmet

4Ψ D

Welcome to Istanbul – the only city on earth that embraces two continents – both Europe and Asia. You will be staying four nights here on the European side of Istanbul in the Sultanahmet area. We chose the location of this hotel because it is perfect for all our needs. Home to the wonderful Blue Mosque, St Sophia and Topkapi Palace, which of course we visit, and the fabulous Spice and Grand Bazaars. A perfect location!

Join us tonight for a welcome drink and dinner, where you will meet your Turkish Tour Guide. This is also the perfect time to meet, and get to know, your fellow travellers.

Full day Istanbul sightseeing

Day 2



Hotel Innova Sultanahmet

4Ψ B,L

We have included a full day of sightseeing today. We visit Topkapi Palace, (formerly the Sultan's Palace) home to the treasures of the Ottoman Empire and one of the most important historical sites in Istanbul. We will also visit the massive mosque of Hagia Sophia or St Sophia (Αγία Σοφία, meaning the Holy Wisdom). Built in 537 as the Greek Orthodox cathedral, later becoming a Roman Catholic cathedral, then a Sunni Mosque, then a museum. It now functions as a mosque. We have included Turkish Tea in the courtyard of the historic 16th century Caferaga Medresesi, a former Islamic school and lunch in a local restaurant.

Your tour of Istanbul would not be complete without visits to the Blue Mosque, the Byzantine Hippodrome, known as the Sultanahmet Square and the nearby Yerebatan Cisterns. Built in the fourth century, these underground cisterns riddle the foundations of the city. They have been extensively excavated and renovated and the piped classical music heightens this unique experience.

Your evening is at leisure and there are numerous excellent restaurants close to your hotel.

Bosphorus Cruise, Grand Bazaar and 'My Time'

Day 3



Hotel Innova Sultanahmet

4Ψ B

This morning, we have included a scenic boat tour along the Bosphorus Strait that links the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara and divides Istanbul into two continents. From here you will cruise around the famous Golden Horn and past the stunning architecture of the majestic Ottoman palaces like Dolmabahce Palace and Beylerbeyi Palace. Your afternoon and evening are free. This is an ideal chance to walk to the nearby Grand Bazaar and Spice Market. The famous Grand Bazaar is an enormous maze of 65 winding, covered streets and arguably the most famous 'covered market' in the world.

Foodies walking tour, 'My Time' and dinner with 'the' view

Day 4



Hotel Innova Sultanahmet

4Ψ B,D

Istanbul must rank as one of the most fascinating and absorbing cities in the world. That is why we stay a 4th night here. Istanbul has been at the junction of trading routes linking Asia, Europe and Africa for thousands of years and their culture and cuisine has absorbed the best of each. Therefore we have included a half day 'foodies' walking tour. It will be a very leisurely start to the day before we meet and split up into smaller groups of 6 – 8 people, and each mini-group will be expertly led by a local guide on a personal walking tour. This will be all about discovering the culinary traditions of Türkiye in the historic neighbourhood & streets of the cosmopolitan Beyoğlu (Pera) district, which is home to a hive of traditional eateries, local food shops, patisseries & bakeries. Time to watch and learn and of course, enjoy the opportunity to sample some of the unique and traditional foods & desserts!

Your afternoon is completely free – 'My Time' to explore this magical city of Istanbul.

This evening, we will walk to a nearby rooftop restaurant for dinner, and the 270 degree views from here are exceptional. To the left you will see the Asian side of the city, connected by massive bridges across the Bosphorus, to Topkapi Palace, the Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque and to the right, the Sea of Marmara. This is undeniably the best view over the city and as dusk creeps in the mosques and grand sights all change colour and twinkle as they absorb the soft evening sunlight and the massive nighttime illuminations. Spectacular!

Cappadocia and your Cave Hotel

Day 5



Hotel Dere Suites



B,D

Saving several days driving we catch a flight to Cappadocia. Our first stop will be a visit to the 'Pottery Village' of Avanos, a town that was first settled in the Bronze Age. Cappadocia is located south of Mount Erciyes, and is a region known for its curious volcanic landscape that has been relentlessly carved by nature and by the people who have lived here. 'Fairy chimneys,' cones and strange rock formations have been eroded and sculpted by wind and rain. Over many centuries people, seeking shelter from the conquerors and marauding armies of the Central Anatolian Plateau, settled here and burrowed whole subterranean towns. Cappadocia is a remarkable place!

Incredible Hot Air Balloon ride and underground cities

Day 6



Hotel Dere Suites



B

Weather depending, we will have an early departure to enjoy a mesmerizing experience – a hot air balloon ride, gliding across the ancient, moon-like, pinnacle landscape, in the still morning air. Incredible! Later we will enjoy a full day touring the unique Göreme Valley (one of the oldest settlements of the region) with the rock chapels, carved by early Christians. We see Uchisar Castle, one of Cappadocia's most prominent landmarks, which is essentially a volcanic rock outcrop and riddled with interconnecting tunnels. Later we continue on to visit the 'underground city' of Kaymakli. It is thought that the Hittites may have excavated the first few levels in the rock when they came under attack from the Phrygians around 1200 BC. These chambers were later expanded into an extensive troglodytic complex by Christians escaping the Arab invasions of the 7th and 8th centuries. To cap off a busy but very fulfilling day, we will also visit the Göreme Open Air Museum. Your evening is at leisure.

To Canakkale

Day 7



Büyük Truva Hotel



B,D

After flying back to Istanbul, we drive south and after crossing the Straits of the Dardanelles we arrive in Canakkale, where we stay for the next three nights.

ANZAC cruise and our 'Gallipoli Campaign'

Day 8



Büyük Truva Hotel



B,L

Today promises to be a very rewarding day. An early start as we cross the Dardanelles, and spend the full day on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Our first activity is rather special as we board a boat and cruise out to sea and approach Ari Burnu – now called ANZAC Cove - from the water, much as the diggers did at dawn over 100 years ago. Setting the scene for a fascinating day, we then explore the key sites on this famous peninsula. As you enter this almost barren land, you can still sense the war and heartache that once dominated the landscape. We will spend time at The Anzac Commemorative site, Anzac Cove, Shrapnel Valley, and Beach Cemetery - home to one of Australia's most legendary soldiers, Private John Simpson. We have included lunch, and entrance to the Kabatepe Museum.

We take in the spectacular Turkish 'Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial, dramatically overlooking Morto Bay with a view across the mouth of the Straits of the Dardanelles. Afterwards we also stop at Cape Helles on the remote tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Here, at the most south-westerly corner of Europe, is the British Commonwealth's main monument to the whole Gallipoli campaign – the Helles Memorial. All Australian & New Zealand units which fought on the peninsula between April and December 1915 are commemorated here.

Later you will visit the Anzac Memorials at Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair, Walker's Ridge, the Nek, and the surrounding trenches. In respect, we have also arranged wreaths for us to lay at the Australian, New Zealand and Turkish memorials.

Ancient Troy & 'My Time' in Canakkale

Day 9



Büyük Truva Hotel



B

This morning, we have included an excursion to the ancient city of Troy, site of the mythological battle Homer immortalized in The Iliad, which dates back to 3,000 BC. On the drive back to Canakkale we stop at the heights of Kephez Point where there is a splendid view of the Dardanelles to Çanakkale and beyond.

Your afternoon and evening are at leisure in Çanakkale. Perhaps stroll through the town to visit Çimenlik Castle - built to protect the Narrows of the Dardanelles by the Ottoman Sultan in 1462, and now home to a Turkish War Museum (entrance fee not included).

Acropolis of Pergamum

Day 10



Hotel Ontur Izmir



B,D

Travelling south down the beautiful mountainous coastline of Türkiye our first stop will be at the ancient Acropolis of Pergamum, famous for its wealth of archaeological ruins where, from the Temple of Trajan, you will take in the stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

Later we continue to Izmir where we stay the next two nights.

The wonder of Ephesus and Şirince

Day 11



Hotel Ontur Izmir



B

The highlight of today will be a visit to one of the ancient wonders of the world, the inspiring ruins of Ephesus. Rated one of the world's best archaeological sites, you will walk along the 2,000-year-old marble streets, visit the Temple of Hadrian and the famous Library of Celsus. Your tour is made complete with a visit to the nearby House of the Virgin Mary nestled high in the hills overlooking the city of Ephesus.

Afterwards, we drive deep into the hills, richly covered with olive trees and vineyards, and wind our way up to the heritage wine village of Şirince, to enjoy lunchtime wandering through the stone streets, and discover a shady restaurant for lunch. Your evening is at leisure in Izmir.

Marmaris, the Aegean Sea and Rhodes

Day 12



Rhodes Plaza Hotel



B,D

Heading south we enjoy lunchtime at leisure in the seaside resort town of Marmaris, located where the Mediterranean meets the Aegean Sea. This will be 'My Time' to explore the shops, seaside cafes and bars and settle into a restaurant for a relaxing lunch. In the afternoon we say farewell to our Turkish guide and we are handed over to our Greek Islands Tour Manager who will be with us all the way to Athens.

Imagine... 10 glorious nights spent island hopping through the idyllic Greek islands. By now you will have seen this tour is distinctly different... a unique tour where we intentionally slip into a much easier, laid-back pace with three nights on both Rhodes and Crete and two nights each on the fabulous islands of Santorini and Mykonos. Using a combination of flights and inter-island ferries you will be introduced to so many of the classical sights as well as ample 'My Time' to relax and savour the atmosphere of the white-washed villages, Greek tavernas and incredible sunsets.

After taking the ferry to Rhodos (Rhodes) we are met at the port and transferred to our beautifully located first class hotel where we stay the next three nights.

Rhodes, the Knights of St John and 'My Time'

Day 13



Rhodes Plaza Hotel



B,D

The first thing you notice about Rhodes city is the massive, perfectly preserved walls and moats that protected the city 600 years ago. After a very leisurely breakfast we are joined by our expert local guide for a walking tour of the Old Rhodes town. First stop will be down at the pretty port where the 'Wonder of the Ancient World', the Colossus of Rhodes, reputedly stood astride the harbour entrance. Then we venture into the gorgeous old town with its shady squares, cafes and winding alleys. Highlight of your day will be a visit to the Palace of the Knights of St John. Your afternoon and evening is entirely free – 'My Time' to explore this world heritage listed city treasure. Packed with shops, bars, restaurants oozing character and that laid back Rhodos/Greek style. This is where the fabulous location of our hotel just outside the old city walls really pays dividends.

Picturesque Lindos, the Acropolis and 'My Time'

Day 14



Rhodes Plaza Hotel



B,D

Let's go explore the island. After a leisurely start we follow the coast to explore the picturesque, ancient village of Lindos, with its perfectly preserved medieval character, pebble-covered streets and whitewashed houses built overlooking the sea. We have included a visit to its striking Acropolis towering above the town. Returning to Rhodes town mid-afternoon, the rest of your day is 'My Time', at leisure to explore and do your own thing.

Flight to Heraklion in Crete

Day 15



Hotel Megaron



B,D

Today we fly to Heraklion in Crete where we stay the next three nights. Crete is the largest of the Greek Islands and a crossroads of many civilisations. Crete is teeming with glorious beaches, impressive mountain villages where customs and traditions remain unchanged, and fertile valleys that boast a rich gastronomic culture. On arrival we transfer to our 5 star hotel which is ideally located in the centre, overlooking the old Venetian harbour. Dinner is included in your hotel.

Minoan Knossos, pretty Agios Nickolaos

Day 16



Hotel Megaron



B

To the cradle of an ancient civilisation – we visit the Minoan city and Palace of Knossos. Dating back 3,000 years the ruins of this bronze age city are dominated by the Royal Palace which covers a massive 3 acres. Capital of the Minoan civilisation, it was also made famous by the Greek story of Theseus, a Prince from Athens and the Minotaur. In around 1350 BC it was all destroyed, likely from a tidal wave from the enormous earthquake that devastated Thira, Santorini, our next island visit. Lunchtime will be enjoyed relaxing in the pretty port of Agios Nikolaos. The rest of your day is at leisure to explore Heraklion's medieval old town. There are some fantastic walks from the castle and the old fishing port, and up through this Cretan capital.

4WD adventure, lunch in the Cretan mountains

Day 17



Hotel Megaron



B,L

What a special day we have planned deep in the Cretan Mountains! Splitting into groups of 5 or 6 we board a series of large 4WDs for our 'safari' into the wild and rugged hinterland. First visit will be a small family run shepherd's farm where goats are to be milked, cheese tasted and home-made raki (clear brandy) mixed with honey and cinnamon will be sampled. Delicious! Next stop will be the sunken village of Sfendili, before driving right over the wild mountains, past lines of old and battered windmills into the fertile plateau at the top. Stepping back to the time of myths, we will have the opportunity to visit a cave which is the fabled birthplace of the God Zeus. Now for lunch, which will be enjoyed on the terrace of a taverna in a little Greek mountain village. What fun! Mid to late afternoon we will arrive back at Heraklion and our late afternoon and evening will be completely free. Maybe stroll into the lively old town, packed with cafes and bars and restaurants or relax in one of the waterside restaurants opposite our hotel. What a brilliant and unique Cretan day!

Fira, Akrotiri, sunset in Santorini

Day 18



Santorini Palace Hotel



B,L

This morning, we catch a high-speed ferry from Heraklion to Santorini. As we near the island you will wonder at the rising volcanic cliffs and understand why Santorini has become known as perhaps the most breathtaking of all the Greek Islands. On arrival we are met by a local guide who will take us to the cliff top ruins of the old capital town of Akrotiri. Time to eat, so we have included a wine tasting and lunch. Afterwards we settle into our superb hotel on the edge of town. The rest of the day, the evening and most of tomorrow is 'My Time' - yours to soak up the ambience of this unique island. Nearby our hotel is the town of Fira, with its white-washed houses, narrow streets, and open-air cafes, all of which cling to steep cliffs. The evenings in Santorini are made for sitting atop the 'Caldera' enjoying the serenity of the spectacular Santorini sunset.

Oia, 'My Time', another Santorini sunset

Day 19



Santorini Palace Hotel



B

This morning, we have included a brief guided walking tour of the other, smaller cliff top town of Oia. Then the rest of the day is all yours, here in Oia, back in Fira or relaxing around the pool in your excellent hotel. 'My Time' in a truly spectacular location. Tonight... another famous Santorini sunset!

The white-washed alleys and windmills of Mykonos

Day 20



Petasos Beach Resort



B,D

Mid-morning we board another high-speed ferry to the picturesque island of Mykonos. In the afternoon we will enjoy a locally guided walking tour of the iconic, white-washed alleys, blue painted windows and doorways set against vibrant, climbing bougainvillea, and photogenic 16 century windmills that has made this island so famous. Your hotel for the next two nights, the Petasos Beach Hotel and Spa stands on a private peninsula, with its own private beach. From its elevated position it has stunning panoramic sea views across the Aegean. An amazing hotel experience. Dinner is included in your hotel.

Olive oil farm, wine tasting and lunch

Day 21



Petasos Beach Resort



B,L

Rather than have a whole day free we thought we would go somewhere for special for lunch. So, we have included a visit to an olive oil farm with tour and tasting & a light lunch. What a delightful way to interrupt the day! The rest of the day is free to relax and savour this iconic island Mykonos - Queen of the Cyclades Islands.

Athens – another ‘Cradle of Civilisation’

Day 22



Hotel Royal Olympic

42 B

Your morning is at leisure. Mid-afternoon we take the high-speed ferry from Mykonos to Athens. On arrival we are transferred to our hotel, where we stay for the final two nights of this extraordinary tour. Your evening is at leisure.

The Acropolis, Olympic Stadium and Farewell Dinner

Day 23



Hotel Royal Olympic

42 B,D

There are so many incredible sights that we take in today on our guided tour of Athens. Highlights will be visits to the Olympic stadium, a walking tour of the Plaka area, and naturally a visit to the incredible Acropolis, perched high above the city on the rocky hill. Dominating the skyline is the massive Parthenon. Truly a ‘Cradle of Civilisation’! Your afternoon is at leisure to explore at your own pace. Tonight, we have included a Farewell dinner in the rooftop restaurant of our hotel.

Tour ends

Day 24



Hotel Royal Olympic

42 B

Sadly, your tour ends today after breakfast. A tour that encompasses the Cradles of Civilisation, hot air balloons, a unique Gallipoli campaign and 9 days hopping through 4 of Greece’s ionic islands.

Hand Selected Experiences

These are just a few of the very special hand selected experiences that will really make your touring experience exceptional and unique, and don’t forget, with Albatross they are always included.



Soar in a Hot Air Balloon ride
in Cappadocia



Istanbul sightseeing tour
To visit the main sights in the ‘Old city’



Bosphorus Cruise
Scenic Boat Cruise



Gallipoli
A Special Gallipoli Immersion



Türkiye’s wonders
Ephesus and Pergamum



Crete
4WD Adventure



Santorini
Cliff Top Towns, Wine Tasting & Sunsets



Mykonos
Lunch at an Olive Oil Farm



Athens - birthplace of Western civilisation
The Mighty Acropolis!

Dates and Prices

Correct as of 11:56 on 29th August 2025

Start Date	End Date	Twin Price	Solo Price	Guaranteed to Depart	
02 Sep 2025	25 Sep 2025	NZD\$20,776	NZD\$27,926	✓	🔴 Sold Out
05 May 2026	28 May 2026	NZD\$24,076	NZD\$31,226		🟢 Space Available
08 Sep 2026	01 Oct 2026	NZD\$24,076	NZD\$31,226		🟢 Space Available

* The itinerary and hotels featured are based on 2026 tour departures and may be subject to change. Any questions, please contact our European Tour Specialists for further details.

Tour Suitability

- ✎ In mid-summer, the heat may be energy sapping.
- ✎ There are a number of beautiful towns and historic sites we visit which require exploring on foot.
- ✎ There are no lifts, and there are uneven stairs in the 'Cave' hotel
- ✎ You will be required to hop on and off 4WD vehicles
- ✎ Between the Greek Islands we will be hopping on and off superfast ferries. 3 of them, plus a more standard ferry. Porterage or assistance is unavailable. Whilst not actually very difficult to do I do need to point out that you must be able to wheel your own bags on and off the ferries without assistance
- ✎ In this itinerary there will be the use of smaller chartered boats which have gangplanks
- ✎ Some internal domestic flights are included in this itinerary, please note that luggage is therefore limited to one suitcase per person with a maximum weight of 23 kg
- ✎ During your 3-night stay in Crete we have included an exciting 4WD adventure deep into the Cretan mountains. During the day, one of the many stops will be so you can visit the cave where the Greek God Zeus was reputedly born. To access the actual cave entrance is reasonably physically challenging and you will require both fitness and mobility. If you choose not to visit the cave there are several typical Cretan cafes and restaurants in the village for you to enjoy a relaxing coffee or beverage. For those of you that do wish to visit the cave, there is an 800 metres uphill walk from the village (and back down again!) to the entrance of the cave, the majority of which is a well paved sloping walkway. The last section of the pathway is rough stone stepped. The decent into the cave is via 240 concrete steps with secure iron railings. Please note that the cave air can be damp, some steps may be a little slippery, and so surefootedness is a necessity. The choice to visit the cave is entirely yours and whether you decide to do so or not, it is only one part of an incredibly thrilling day out in the Cretan Mountains. As a note, knowing some travellers will opt not visit the cave, the modest entrance fee into the cave is not included.

Please refer to our Tour Suitability section for more information.

Terms & Conditions

- Information provided is true and correct at time of issue. Airfares not included. For further details please contact your consultant or full terms and conditions may be found at www.albatrosstours.com.au/booking-conditions. Albatross Tours ABN 45 010 585 143. ATIA Accreditation No: A11341. CATO Accreditation No. 69562707